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ABSTRACT

This paper examines the functioning of the Public School Safety Commission that was established in a large west coast city to study the problem of violence in the city's public schools. The commission was established by the board of education in the spring of 1974 and issued its final report in July 1974. Over 60 community organizations, represented by more than 110 individuals, participated in early meetings of the commission, although the number of participating organizations and individuals declined as time went on. The analysis and discussion is organized into three sections. The first section analyzes the participating organizations and representatives on the commission and discusses the relative degree of community involvement versus administrative control of the commission. The second section examines the commission's recommendations and reports the final votes on each recommendation. The final section reports the author's observations of political manipulation and control of the commission by the school administration and describes how the business of the commission was actually conducted and directed. (Author/JG)

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AN ANALYTICAL REVIEW OF A SCHOOL-COMMUNITY COMMISSION

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University of Oregon
1975

Introduction

The debate over ID cards, security measures, and police on-campus rages. The climate within Public School (PS) Administration Buildings throughout the United States is, indeed, unseasonably hot. Summer Board of Education Meetings, while relatively calm, have been pre-empted and co-opted by news specials and press conferences discussing the future of the schools. The dissenting groups have shifted the political arena, from the Commission on School Safety to the Board room, arguing that the Board of Education has had total control of any community input throughout the preparation of the Report.

The Public School Safety Commission was established by the Board of Education early in 1974 as a response to the 1973 Grand Jury Report and as a "positive" reaction to the demise of the school superintendent. The Board appointed a local black businessman and the former head of the successful quakesafe bond drive, as the Safety Commission Chairman. The first meeting (General Assembly) adjourned on a Saturday in the Spring of 1974. The meetings were open to the public and official membership was decided early upon the basis of anyone wishing to participate. Over sixty organizations were represented with over 110 individuals participating. As will be shown later, this approach to Community involvement, while enhancing the different kinds of organizations causes over-representation in terms of numbers, to those desiring more order in the schools.

The Commission was divided into five Committees (Figure II): (1) truancy, (2) Vandalism, (3) Safe and Secure Teaching/Learning Environment, (4) School-Site Discipline, and (5) Interagency Cooperation. These reflected the six charges leveled by the Grand Jury Report upon which the Public Schools must follow-up. Each Committee had a Chairperson, respectively: (1) a student,

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(2) an ethnic community member, (3) a private attorney, (4) a school para-professional, and (5) an attorney with a public agency. The Committees also had Public School officials assigned to each (see below). Each committee varied in the number of representatives and the number of organizations participating. The choice was left up to the members of the Commission.

The Commission met every Saturday, except Memorial Weekend, through the last week in June. Frequent evening, early morning, and luncheon meetings were held; a factor, however, prohibiting extensive community involvement. In all, the Commission finally passed 35 recommendations ranging from ID cards (the most controversial) to more school alternatives (the most progressive) to better school-site facility maintenance. The Board considered the final Report in mid-July with "working sessions" into August. Ten groups prepared their own Report which was submitted to the Board in late July by the Educational Chairperson of a powerful local ethnic community-based political group.

In an earlier article (Prisma, June-July, 1974), I outlined four factors by which this Commission or others could be measured in terms of its legitimacy and effectiveness in dealing with the schools. Repeating the four elements will provide a standard and guideline for the rest of the paper;

1. Community Involvement. The solution to violence in the schools must involve everyone. Conflict is likely to arise between the views of all interested parties. Ultimate responsibility for educational decisions must rest with those who are its products: the students and the community.

2. Court Action. The use of legal action to stop the schools from implementing policies which are liable to cause violence is the last resort of the recipients of education. Students, parents, and concerned citizen /organizations should be on guard for school policies that restrict student/community participation in school decision-making, or classify students on any basis, or attempt to summarily punish students.

3. Pressure. (political and otherwise). The clients of the educational system must stand ready to bring pressure against the local school board, administrators, and school site personnel.

Part of the pressure might be to require and oversee the strict evaluation (accountability) of all school district personnel.

4. Daily school operations. Educational programs and school functions must be watched. The day-to-day operations of the schools must be evaluated frequently and carefully.

Theoretical Perspective

The theoretical context for the data (presented below) rests with three recent publications: John Ogbu, The Next Generation (N.Y.: Academic Press, 1974), an anthropological study of the Stockton, California, School System in its treatment of Blacks and Chicanos; Martin Carnoy, Education as Cultural Imperialism (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1974), an economic-historical cross-cultural examination into the function of education; and Christopher Jencks, et al. Inequality (N.Y.: Academic Press, 1972), a massive sociological study into factors and causes of educational inequalities.

Ogbu discusses the "functional myth" of community involvement in the public schools. He points out (1974:pp.173-178) that what the schools mean by "involvement" is entirely different from what the community means. The latter sees involvement as participation in social events, charity, or non-academic school activities. The comminity sees it as being part of the decision-making process or having a "heavy hand" in policy making itself. The separate belief systems, therefore, clash. Consequently, there is little community involvement of either kind. Community people become frustrated; school officials claim the community is apathetic.

A further point, made by Ogbu, is illustrated in Jencks extensive study: school authorities believe that community involvement leads to better home-based control on students, meaning less discipline problems, and more academic achievement. This belief is not founded in fact, as Jencks notes. Furthermore, as Ogbu demonstrates, parent involvement in the schools (e.g. going to P. T. A. conferences, volunteering, or calling/seeing teachers) can be academically

destructive. One parent remarked that her daughter received excellent grades in elementary school when she was deeply "involved". Then she discovered in junior high that her daughter could not read or write, so she stopped participating in the schools. It was clear to this parent that the teacher was grading her performance and not her daughter's.

Carnoy places this information in a larger picture when he documents the real (not ideal) function of educational systems in any society: to control and direct the minds of the young. Community involvement (in the power sense) is therefore, directly opposed to that view. History has shown that educational institutions are used to subvert, thwart, and manipulate other cultures.

The result is a "myth" that educational systems exist for the community which they are supposed to serve. In the end the system is managed by and for the experts. The study of the School Safety Commission in this city is a classic example. In it, we will present data substantiating the "rule by experts" of public education.

Throughout the paper, the use of community refers specifically to the ethnic, minority, and volunteer people and organizations in this city. As official school research shows, the city in 1970 had a population of 361,561: 48.8% white; 34.8% black; 9.8% with Spanish Surnames; 3.9% Asians, and 1.8% other minorities (e.g. Filipinos, American Indians, etc.) The shift to more ethnic and minority gorups increased in the late 1960s and early 1970s. The actual school population reflects this change comparing 1969 to 1973, the school district reported:*

	White	Black	Spanish Surname	Asian	Other Minority
1969	28.1	57.2	8.3	5.2	1.2
1973	20.1	64.2	7.7	5.7	2.3

*Notice the difference between the ethnic/minority populations of the city and the schools. Furthermore, there are far more minorities (3 to1) in the schools than whites. The paper is concerned with the 2/3rds minority population as being the"community".

The Research as Participant Observer

My position was as a volunteer "Research Specialist." Later I was appointed Parliamentarian and Official Vote-Counter. I considered both as important political positions for those wanting change in the schools. Unlike the ten organizations that resigned on the first day of voting for recommendations, I decided to stay.

My reasons were four-fold. First, early on I saw a clear, deliberate, conflict between the interests of the community and the Public School Administration. My dilema was profound: with whom do I side? I thought it best to appear to be objective, detached, and neutral--at least to the School Administration. The result would be, secondly, that I could collect inside information, data, and statistics which local school critics could not gather; and thirdly, that I might be placed in an important political position (as I was later appointed Parliamentarian and Official Vote-Counter) where I would be able to influence final recommendations and Commission decisions. As it turned out, I was correct on the former and naive about the latter. The withdrawal of the "radical groups" from the Commission left me alone with the overpowering influence of the Public School Administration on the Report which finally prevented anyone, save them, from influencing its format, content, and appearance.

The fourth reason reflects the utility of participant-observation itself. Gathering data from the Report on the official Commission minutes leaves much to be desired. However, actually attending Commission Committee meetings, conferences, trauma sessions, and policy briefings shed a different light on the final recommendations. Consequently, the data reported here provides a very thorough report and accurate picture of community participation in educational decision-making.

With this background in mind, I want to present some data and findings on the Report by the commission. An analysis of this data shows two significant results. First, the Commission was not, even partially, community-based. The organizations listed and the recommendations made reflect school administration policy (despite rhetoric to the contrary) and desires. Second, the content or substance of the recommendations themselves are very questionable and reflect individual administrative biases. Analysis shows that few recommendations addressed fundamental change in the schools. Most were stop-gap measures designed to meet administrative concerns and ends.

Data Collection Procedures

Against these four factors, the following data and analyses are presented in three sections. The first section is an analysis of the participating organizations and representatives on the Commission. This information provides a base-line for the voting behavior of each. The groups which resigned shed some light on the general tone and directions of the meetings. Clearly the data proves the degree of community involvement contrasted with the degree of administrative control.

The second section examines the recommendations themselves. An overall assessment will be given as well an an analysis of specific recommendations. The final votes on each recommendation can be seen as an indicator of the direction taken in the over-all Report.

The final section reports observations of political manipulation and control by the Public School Administration. These episodes reveal how business was actually conducted and directed. The Report itself and the process by which it was "put together" reveal alarming administrative influences.

I. Organizations and Representatives

In order to analyze the available data from meetings, minutes, observations, and records, the Commission can be categorized first by organizations/representa-

tives and them by order/movement. The first category was self-imposed by the total Commission itself. The official organizations were not restricted initially; nor were the numbers of members (see Figure I, Stage I). However, a month later, the Commission leadership felt an official accounting and cut-off point had come. Thus the "strict" rule of three unexcused absences from Saturday meetings (only) was followed. As Figure I shows, the loss in order and movement organizations was slight (from 5 to 7 and 5 to 1 equally) although the movement organizations recorded four times as many (4 to 1 ratio) lost. The loss in representatives, however, was heavy. Order organizations loss 5 members while movement ones loss 14 members. Consequently, the accurate documentation of organizations and representatives is very significant in this presentation.

The categorization of order/movement to organizations and representative is based on four factors. First the decisions, directions, and final recommendations made by the Commission can be seen as either being in defense of the present situations/policies or propagating new environments/policies. While there may be legitimate and serious challenges to the classification of organizations and their representatives (e.g. are the NAACP or the Human Rights Commission movement organizations? or the P. T. A. or Chinese Community Council order organization? Do the representatives of each share the organizational views?) the utility of grounding each to a particular belief system and philosophical perspective far outweighs any minor changes or challenges. In fact, just before the final vote on recommendations, a group of seven official movement organizations (and their ten representatives) resigned from the Commission en massé believing that other such organizations/representatives were too conservative.

Second, the voting behavior and debate of organizations/representatives was clearly drawn upon order and movement philosophical positions. Three

Figure I

Participation of Commission Members (Official Votes)

by Organization and Representation

(March - July 1974)

Attendance Stages

	Stage I Initial (Problems)	Stage II Middle (Investigations)	Stage III End (Recommendations)	Stage IV Final (Votes)
ORDER				
Organizations	24	23	20	19
Representatives	43	38	49	51
MOVEMENT				
Organizations	32	28	24	17
Representatives	75	61	42	35
TOTAL				
Organizations	57	51	44	36
Representatives	118	99	91	86

"political school issues" were carried by the majority movement representatives during Stage II (see Firgure I) when they held the early balance of power: (1) the advocation of community input into the selection of a new school superintendent; (2) the rehiring of 104 non-tenured teachers who were laid off; and (3) the strong implementation of Affirmative Action Policies. However, the balance of power (votes) shifted by the time Stage III (Figure I) developed, demonstrating to the radical groups that the tide had changed and it would best to get out rather than be submerged. The early General Assembly votes tended to be more liberal than the individual Committee votes since (as Figure III illustrates) more people attended the Saturday sessions.

Third, research on the voting behavior of organizations (David Truman, The Governmental Process, 1952) indicates that groups do take rather consistent philosophical stands. Studies of groups by historians and political scientists alike indicate that positions and policies are made based upon the vested interests of the organizations.

Finally, the representatives of organizations consistently, reflect the attitudes and beliefs of their respective organizations. Why otherwise would they belong? or consent to represent the organizations? Donald Campell et al. in American Voting Behavior (originally 1956) make this explicit point. The survey research by corporations, like Harris and Gallup, predicate their own existence on this fact.

Consequently, the approach taken in this paper sees organizations/representatives as being essentially either for change (movement) or for remaining the same (order). While Figure I shows only the data as officially reported in the Commission Minutes, Figure II provides data by each Committee. The totals differ for two reasons. One, members of different organizations could participate on more than one Committee; as well as more organizations could be

represented on Committees since several organizations had multiple members (and participating alternates).

The second factor (included in Figure II) is highly significant since it is due to the committee structure itself: each Committee had at least three participating (but non-voting) Public School Administrative officials, i.e. one recorder and two resource persons on each, not including the Director of Community Relations, who served as the chief consul (e.g. ex officio Co-chairperson) to the Commission Chairperson. There were consistently fourteen participating administrative personnel scattered throughout the five Committees. The power and influence of these administrative representatives is obvious: a) they were the record keepers and reporters; b) they were the primary source of data, information, and "ideas"; and c) they were the recommenders of policy.

Figure II shows in detail the pattern of participation by Committees over the four months of the Commission's existence. The consistent role of the administrative officials (recorders and resource persons) shows tellingly in the data. While this group did not vote, their voice was heard and heeded. The data indicates that the forces of order maintained a strong and influencial level of participation throughout the proceedings. The movement forces, however, steedily declined before Stage IV and significantly in the Final Report Stage.

The reasons for the steady decline in community involvement can be seen in Figure III, by the example of two separate Committees. The Vandalism Committee data was extracted from official Committee and Commission records. The Safe and Secure Learning/Teaching Environment Committee information was the result of actual observations. As noted in Figure III, the Committees both meet on Saturdays (three weeks segments were taken at random) and in Mid-Week

Figure II

Participation of Commission Members
(Voting and Non-Voting) by Committees

ATTENDANCE STAGES

COMMITTEES		Stage I Initial April		Stage II Middle May		Stage III End June		Stage IV Final July	
		Organ.	Repr.	Organ.	Repr.	Organ.	Repr.	Organ.	Rep.
Truancy	Order	3	5	3	5	4	5	4	7
	Move	5	7	5	7	4	6	4	9
Vanda-lism	Order	7	7	5	7	3	6	3	6
	Move	4	8	4	5	4	6	3	7
Safe & Secure	Order	8	11	8	9	3	5	7	13
	Move	5	7	5	5	3	3	4	4
Disci-pline	Order	10	12	7	11	7	9	7	14
	Move	4	6	3	4	5	5	4	5
Inter-Agency	Order	8	8	7	7	6	7	5	11
	Move	10	12	10	11	9	10	8	9
TOTAL	Order	36	43	30	39	23	32	26	51
	Move	28	40	27	32	25	30	23	34

Figure III

Participation of Commission Members
(Voting and Non-Voting)
on Two Committees

Attendance Dates

		Middle						End						Totals			
		Sat May 4th		Mid-Week		Sat June 8th		Mid-Week		Sat. June 15th		Mid-Week		Sat		Mid-Week	
		O	R	O	R	O	R	O	R	O	R	O	R	O	R	O	R
Vanda-lism	Order	5	7	5	7	3	6	3	6	3	6	4	6	3.7	6.3	4·0	6.3
	Move	4	5	1	1	4	6	1	1	4	4	1	1	4·0	5.0	1.0	1·0
Safe/ Secure	Order	8	9	3	4	3	5	3	5	3	5	2	2	4.7	6.3	2.7	3.7
	Move	5	5	2	2	3	3	1	1	2	2	0	0	3.3	3.3	1.1	1.1
														Total Averages			
Total	Order	13	16	8	11	6	11	6	11	6	11	6	8	4.2	6.3	3.3	5.0
	Move	9	10	3	3	7	9	2	2	6	6	6	6	3.6	4.1	1.0	1.0

(a Tuesday or Wednesday). Each had roughly the same number of members (12 to 14) in early May while Safe/Secure had more organizations represented (13 to 9).

There are two interesting resulting patterns from the Committee data in Figure II which help to explain the "drop-out" rate of movement organizations and representatives. First, in both Committees the overall pattern showed near parity of attendance on Saturdays (from Figure III):

		Organization	Representation
Vandalism	Order	3.7	6.3
	Move	4.0	5.0
	Total	7.7	11.3
Safe/Secure	Order	4.7	6.3
	Move	3.3	3.3
	Total	8.0	9.6

While there were slightly more representatives of order, the figures show that both Committees approximated the same Saturday attendance levels. However, the mid-week (actual work and policy making sessions) tell a different story (from Figure III):

		Organization	Representation
Vandalism	Order	4.0	6.3
	Move	1.0	1.0
	Total	5.0	7.3
Safe/Secure	Order	2.7	3.7
	Move	1.1	1.1
	Total	3.7	4.8

The total organizations represented during the week remained somewhat consistent. Yet the individuals present dropped significantly, especially in the Safe/Secure Committee. Furthermore, the figures show that the organizations and representatives of order far outweighed those of movement (Vandalism 4 to 1 and Safe/Secure about 2 to 1).

The explanation for this pattern of high Saturday attendance and low Mid-Week attendance, dominated by the organizations and representatives of order appear as follows:

1. The irregular and inconveniently timed (early morning or evening) and placed (at the Administration Building) Mid-Week meetings prohibited community people from attending. Who will cook? babysit? or be with the family? The School Administrative Offices are, furthermore, in a "bad" area of the city. One parent remarked: "I won't go there at nite."

2. The organizations or order, heavily dominated by school administrators are located in the meeting building. Most see their duty (and jobs) at stake and feel compelled to attend. One administrative recorder said: "The whole Commission is part of my job in Community Relations!"

3. The organizations of order often gave their representatives (or the businesses these people worked for) release time to participate in "community affairs." Consequently time spent at meetings could be compensated for later. One attorney stated: "My partner handles the money cases; so he lets me get involved in the Community." The same was not true for representatives of volunteer community organizations.

4. The Mid-Week meetings were the decision sessions whereas the Saturday sessions became informational. Consequently, Saturday sessions were taken up talking about other committees' questionaires, hearing about methods supplied by the resource persons, and "cleaning up" recommendation language. Mid-Week sessions were devoted to policy decisions and adoption of recommendations. Saturday sessions were formal and dull.

The second pattern visible in Figure III about these two Committees is the overall decline in attendance of the organizations/representatives of movement in comparison to those of order.

		Saturday		Mid-Week	
		Org.	Rep.	Org.	Rep.
Vandalism and Safe/Secure	Order	4.2	6.3	3.3	5.0
	Move	3.6	4.1	1.0	1.0
	Total Difference	1.6	2.2	2.2	4.0

The average totals show that on Saturdays there were 1.6 more organizations and 2.2 representatives of order present. The figure becomes highly exaggerated by the Mid-Week averages when 2.3 more organizations and 4.0 representatives of order were present.

The picture is somewhat complete. Even before the exit of the radical movement organizations, the Committees were heavily lopsided. This pattern was distinctly different from the near equality of the Commission membership in its early stage (see Figure I, Stage I). Three additional reasons for the decline (to those four listed above) can be given:

5. Individuals and groups realized that the Committees were being given only one side of the "schooling" story. Investigation and evidence was slanted. This, again, was a result of the sustaining power of the forces of order, especially the "assigned" school officials.

6. The Committee participants realized that they were being used. They had no power and little control over the recommendations being put together. When a movement member proposed a tough recommendation for the evaluation of administrators, it was presented for a vote passed on Saturday; watered down on Wednesday; pared down even further the next Saturday; and finally approved the next Wednesday.

7. The voting procedure of the Committees, like the total Commission was based on one person/one vote. However, few students (school was almost out) ever showed, while school officials were only consultants. However, regional, administrative, school-site, classified, and para-professional personnel did vote. They did so consistently in Committees and in the General Assembly.

II. Recommendations

Figure IV concerns the categorization of activity/inactivity of Commission members. The list is by Committee as reflected in the final Report (July 9th). Recall that by this time seven organizations and 10 representatives of the radical movement groups had resigned. The chart is instructive since it explodes the "myth of community involvement" in the final deliberations of the Commission. The data, as assembled, is based on observational records as voting patterns on recommendations by the Commission memberships. Oakland Public School personnel are included, since in some cases, they were the only active Committee members.

The last Stage (IV) saw a voting total of 26 organizations and 51 representatives of order compared respectively to 23 organizations and 34 representatived of movement. These figures, taken from the final Report of the Commission provide a clear indication of the content, direction, and kind of recommendations which were submitted to the Board of Education.

Searching beneath the gross voting data are even more startling facts. The categorization of the representatives by Committee (cross-checked by actual attendance) into active and inactive grouping reveal that there was a two to one (36 to 18) preponderance of people representing order who were active over those from movement organizations. As suspected, the inactive grouping was about even (15 to 16).

On every Committee, the representatives of order clearly dominated. While voting eliminates the fourteen School officials, order influence weighed heavily. One Committee's resource person (an OPS employee) pushed through a hard-line recommendation which was only rejected on the Assemble floor

Figure IV

Active/Inactive Participation of Voting and Non-Voting Commission Members by Committees

Final Attendance Stage

July 9, 1974
Report

COMMITTEES		Organization Representatives			
			Active	Inactive	Total
Truancy	Order	4	5	2	7
	Move	4	4	5	9
Vanda-lism	Order	3	6	0	6
	Move	3	2	5	7
Safe/ Secure	Order	7	6	7	13
	Move	4	3	1	4
Disci-pline	Order	7	9	5	14
	Move	4	2	3	5
Inter-Agency	Order	5	10	1	11
	Move	8	7	2	9
Total	Order	26	36	15	51
	Move	23	18	16	34

because of its "vagueness." The tabled recommendation went back to the Committee for further debate. Indeed it was hotly debated--between two school resource persons (the proponent and another school administrator). While other Committee members had to leave this (Mid-Week) session, the two administrators fought to a tie. The issue was: should more truancy people be hired to serve in one administrator's office or in another? Time ran out. The recommendation died.

The actual recommendations can also be categorized as representing either order or movement (Figure V). The vote tally is reported to provide a clear picture of the strengths (in terms of voting) that each recommendation could muster. For example, the vote to abolish corporeal punishment in the schools (#18) was close and can be seen as movement. Likewise the vote to establish non-punitive but counseling truancy teams was overwhelmingly approved. Recommendations on implementing ID cards, security devices, and campus control supervisors won approval.

The nature of the political arena is such that correlating organizational/representative voting with final recommendations in the General Assembly is deceiving. The earlier data, therefore, focused upon committee voting/attendance patterns. The problems with tracing final votes by organizations/representatives in the larger Assembly are three-fold:

First, the final recommendations are a result of amendments and compromise. Thus, an objection can often be made into either a part of the recommendation or traded later for the passage of another recommendation. The Commission members were well aware of this political process. The object of the Commission leadership and the school staff was to "keep everybody together." Consequently, the Director of Community Relations told the Commission Chairperson in private:

> "Do not allow any conflicts to arise. Just table them or get them put aside."

Figure V

Official Vote on Recommendations

	Unanimous	2/3rds	Close	Total
Order	#7, 8, 10 15, 17, 21, 22 26, N=9	#3, 4, 9, 12, 13, 20 24, 27, 28 29, 30, 34 35, N=14	#31, 33 N=2	25
Movement	#1, 5 N=2	#2, 16, 23 25 N=4	#6, 18, 19, 32 N=4	10

Second, the establishment of Voting procedures, presented by school staff sub-committee, placed obstacles in the path of debate and argument. As indicated above, control was well enforced by the Chair and replicated within each Committee. Voting took place by Committees.

Third, the deadlines and pace of the Commission was very time-oriented. Work, evidence, and recommendations had to be submitted before July 15th. By that stage (for at least a month: June 14th - July 15th), students and teachers were on vacation. School Administrators, however, do not leave until August. The actual Report itself was to be a "Preliminary" one. The Assembly officially voted on its being called just that. However, in print, under school staff guidance, the Report appears to be a definitive and final document.

Further the tasks of the Commission itself were laid out in advance by the Grand Jury Report as transmitted to the Board. Therefore, each Committee was to address five separate issues put before it by the Grand Jury. Little or no time, resources, research, or inquiry was given to the underlying causes of violence in the schools. Consequently, few solutions found their way into the Report.

The final recommendations, as seen in the order/movement context, reveal that 25 represent order and 10 represent movement. The degree (or vote margin) is also instructive. There are 9 unanimous recommendations which call for more order in the schooling process; while there are only 2 unanimous recommendations implying movement. The former are interesting since one establishes the aforementioned truancy team and the other rewords an administrative brochure giving students more rights. By and large, the unanimous order recommendations reflect static, non-change educational methods: stricter evaluation of teachers and counselors (administrators receive lighter scrutiny), enforcement of existing procedures, establishment of more bureaucrats, and improvement of

school facilities.

The vast number of recommendations (18 in all) received 2/3 votes again indicating the political process of compromise and trade-offs in action. Controversial issues like ID cards, security devices, and campus control officers all received approval. In each case an amendment placaded the movement representatives: ID cards with photos will have no negatives; security devices are optional; and campus control officers will receive "human relations training," etc. Practice and past policy leads one to be suspicious of these minute "safe-guards."

Finally, the question must be asked as to why there are no (little, few) innovative or creative recommendations? The answer rests in the composition and control of the committees and the total Commission. The survey questionaire which was distributed throughout the district asked the wrong questions in a questionable (sic) manner. Furthermore, the data from the results is conflicting and confusing. As one historian has said: "history is written from the viewpoint of the victor." An examination into the Commission leadership further documents the reasons behind the static nature of the Report.

II. Observations

Throughout the paper, incidents of observational data have been reported. This section, however, addresses itself to the leadership and support function of the Commission by school staff. Summarizing briefly the aforementioned school staff influences, we have:

1. School certified staff served as recorders and resource persons to each Committee.
2. The Public School, Director of Community Relations was ex-officio Co-chairperson of the Commission.
3. School secretarial staff did all the typing and collating of materials and records.

4. School para-professional staff served on Committees.
5. School classified staff served on Committees.
6. School teachers and students served on all Committees.
7. The School Research Department provided the technical skills in the survey gathering and analysis.
8. School facilities were used for the meetings.

In addition to these areas of direct school influence and control, three others are important to note: (9) meetings and briefings, (10) the composition and format of the Report, and (11) the documentation process.

Meetings and Briefings:

Weekly School staff meetings were held among members of the Community Relations Department. At this time recorders reported on the discussions of each Committee. This information went directly to the Director and subsequently to the School Administrative Officials. Apparently (information is difficult to obtain), the meetings were also strategy sessions. What was to be discussed in future Committees was planned. The kinds of information were cross-checked. However, the coordination function alone raises serious questions of direction, control, and manipulation in the entire process of formulating community-based recommendations.

Another series of briefings also took place between the Commission Chairperson, the Director of Community Relations, the Superintendent, and the Board of Education President. While these were informational in design, they were also strategy oriented and directional in purpose. Decisions were again made about content and deliberations of Committees.

The public demands for information were controlled and filtered through these elite groups. The press releases and press conferences were evasive at best. Interestingly enough, the lack of information by the figure-head Chairperson is no accident. He rarely attended any Saturday Committee meeting and never attended

Mid-Week meetings. Literally all his information about the Committees came through the Director of Community Relations.

Executive sessions of Committee Chairpersons (usually held at 7:30 A. M. on Saturdays) provided the Commission Chairperson the only opportunity for interaction with Committee work. However, these executive sessions were only informational provided for by the Director of Community Relations. Likewise, all the recorders and resource persons were in full attendance at these meetings. Thus, there were at least fourteen school staff members and five Community Chairpersons in attendance. Little debate, discussion, or planning took place.

The Report:

Perhaps the most balant cohersion of any community involvement in the Commission's tasks come with the composition, format, and content of the Report itself. As indicated earlier, the Assembly voted to call it a Preliminary Report. That title never appeared.

A private argument between the Commission Chairperson and the Director of Community Relations resulted in assurances by the latter that the three "political" recommendations would be given prominent space. Instead, they were relagated to passing mention:

> "the inclusion of community representation on the committee formed to screen and select applicants for the position of Superintendent of Schools; the retention of teachers and instructional assistants who received notice of termination...." (Report p. 2-3)

These passing remarks, plus one recommendation calling for Affirmative Action were to be given ample space as official work of the Commission. They were not.

Editing, therefore, played an important role in the Report. The deliberate attempt to play down so-called political issues was successfully executed by the school staff. The entire drafting of the Report and earlier survey research questionaires was taken (not given) by the school staff.

The Report's format, finally, was a school staff decision and production. The Report records no votes or specification of further or unfinished business. Again an Assembly vote to recommend the continuation of the Commission was omitted and reworded as:

> "Finally the Commission voted to meet again in September, 1974, as a follow-up meeting to the presentation of Commission recommendations to the Board of Education." (Report, p. 3)

The actual recommendation was strongly worded and implied that the Commission not only had more work to accomplish, but also would be watching the outcome of the Board's deliberations. The Report itself was to be structured to make this point explicit and to outline further areas of study. It was not.

Documentation:

The records, minutes, and deliberations were all kept under close secrutiny of the school staff. Indications are that the official business was deliberately distorted or simply not reported. In checking over observational data against official Committee and Commission documents, omissions are regular and reports are slanted. For example, the minutes do not reflect votes or the political process in the adoption of recommendations. The omission of such information gives a distorted view of the content of Committee and Commission discussions and decisions.

Another questionable area is the actual attendance equals official voting status factor. Some organizations were summarily dismissed after the three absences rule was adopted (as recommended by school staff). However, exceptions (unexcussed absences) were allowed in the cases of favored groups who represented order organizations. The Report indicates at least three such organizations and representatives were a part of the Safe/Secure Committee. From observational data, the three members were absent throughout the months of May and June.

Other serious discrepancies exist, especially in the reporting of the

four issues listed under: affirmative action, rehiring teachers, selection of a superintendent, and continuance of the Commissions. These items escaped official and proper documentation.

Conclusion

The paper has systematically presented, reviewed and analyzed data on the School Safety Commission. From the information collected, it is inescapable to conclude that the entire Report of the Commission neither reflects the community nor accurately suggests solutions to violence in the public schools. The "myth of community involvement" is a myth. This particular ethnographic example is highly useful to those interested in innovative and progressive change in the public schools.

Unhappily, the Commission failed. On attendance alone, the Commission had a worse drop-out problem than the public schools. On issues, it was initially right headed but thwarted by the forces of order. On substantiative issues/ recommendations, it was misled and deceived. Finally, on setting an example or proto-type for other school districts, the Commission provided a bad model.

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